

# LINKS TO THE PAST

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY • CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY • SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA.

## From the Department Chair

Welcome to the first issue of *Links to the Past*, the History Department's reformatted newsletter which we plan to publish on an annual basis. In this issue, we focus primarily on the department. Our next issue will profile alumni news. Please complete the form on page four to bring us up-to-date regarding your life and career.

The History Department has experienced many changes since you last heard from us. I was appointed as Chair one year ago, replacing Robert Burton, who had served the department in this capacity for eighteen years. We said goodbye to Donald Grinde, who left Cal Poly in August 1996 to accept a position at the University of Vermont. Many new faculty have recently joined us. Lynn M. Hudson, a specialist in African American history, accepted a tenure-track position in September 1996. Lewis Call, a lecturer who teaches History 315 and upper-division courses on the history of science and technology, also joined the department that Fall.



In 1998, Craig Harlan, a lecturer for many years at Cal Poly, was hired in a tenure-track position in the area of historiography. Gary Steenson, who teaches Modern World History, also started teaching for us that year. Our most recent addition is Robert Detweiler, Trustee Professor, who began offering early American history courses for the department in Winter quarter, 1999. We have also experienced some staff changes. Linda Way was hired in April 1998 as our new Department Secretary, replacing Joyce Coe, who retired after many years of service to Cal Poly.

It's been an exciting and busy year. In addition to launching our newsletter, we've worked on a new General Education program which has prompted extensive curricular changes, considered how to best use assessment goals and criteria to improve the History major, consulted with many constituencies regarding a proposed increase in student fees at Cal Poly, and created a new web page for the department. Please use it to follow changes in the department and to connect with the historical profession. You'll find information about the faculty, descriptions of the courses we now teach, and links to some great historical documents.

Best wishes,

*Carolyn J. Stefanco*

## Awards and Scholarships:

*Generous Contributions Help Selected Students*

Each year the Department of History is privileged to give out three awards for student excellence.

- The Jeri Ewy Thiel Memorial Scholarship (\$1,000) recognizes an outstanding student based on grade point average, community service, and application letter.
- The J. Irving Snetsinger Memorial Scholarship (\$500) is given for an outstanding paper or senior project by a student.
- The Outstanding Senior Award as the name suggests, is an honor that the Department bestows on a senior student for all-around excellence.

George Cotkin, former chair of the Scholarships and Senior Award Committee, noted that the winners for the academic year 1997-1998 were: Rachel Thiede (Thiel Memorial Scholarship), Elizabeth Lamoree (Snetsinger Memorial Scholarship), and Elizabeth Budd (Outstanding Senior Award).

More about Thiel Scholarship...  
The Jeri Ewy Thiel Memorial Scholarship was established in 1991 to acknowledge an outstanding student based on grade point average, community service, and application letter. This

\$1,000 scholarship is given annually at the History Department awards dinner.

Bruce Thiel, husband of Jeri, noted, "The scholarship has been established in remembrance of a wonderful person, who was a true student of history and always wanted to be part of the European court of the 18th century. A true romantic, Jeri spent much time wandering the Cal Poly campus and the surrounding countryside... with fond memories of it all!"

More about Snetsinger Scholarship...

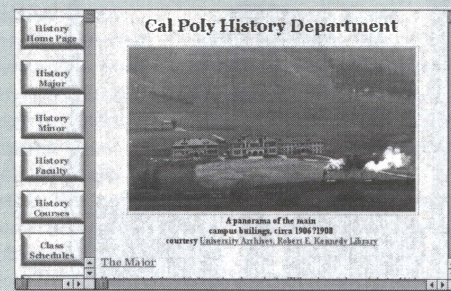
The J. Irving Snetsinger Memorial Scholarship was established in 1995 to acknowledge and reward a history major for writing excellence. The award is for \$500 and is given annually at the History Department awards dinner.

The scholarship is named after John Irving Snetsinger, who spent much of his career writing for newspapers and magazines. During the mid-1930s he was the Hollywood reporter for the *Toronto Star*, Canada's leading and largest daily paper. In retirement in the 1980s, he wrote a newspaper column about retirement in Southern California. His son, History professor John Snetsinger, notes: "Throughout his life J. Irving Snetsinger loved the well-written article or book, so it is fitting that a memorial award in his name honors writing excellence."

## HAVE YOU VISITED OUR WEB PAGE?

URL: <http://www.calpoly.edu/~hist/>

We have a new web page which includes historical photographs, links to history professors' web pages (where applicable), class schedules, office hours, and other helpful information for new and continuing students. Under "Links to the Past," there are dozens of interesting web sites for history buffs. Take a peek and let us know what you think. You may email your comments to: [lway@calpoly.edu](mailto:lway@calpoly.edu).



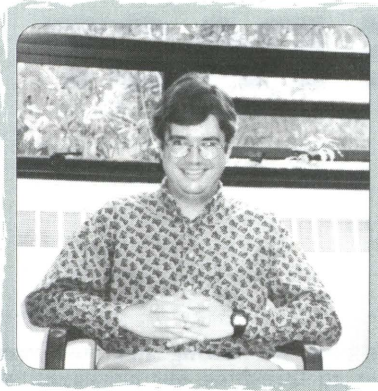
## A BIG "THANK YOU" TO OUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

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## Meet our new faculty



I received my Ph.D. from the University of California, Irvine, in 1996. Luckily, I was able to escape from behind the Orange Curtain and come to the beautiful central coast. I teach Modern World History at Cal Poly. It's a great course to teach. I meet students with a wide variety of backgrounds and interests. Sometimes I'm able to help them locate something they didn't know they possessed, namely an interest in historical inquiry. That's very satisfying.

My field of research is European intellectual history. Most of my publications so far have been about the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. I wrote an article about Nietzsche's critique of Darwinism, and another about his relationship to the Enlightenment tradition. At present I'm working on a history of postmodern anarchism.

In my spare time, I study tai chi chuan and plan the revolution. I live in Pismo Beach with my wife Cynthia, who teaches Special Ed in the Santa Maria School District. Our cat, Bert, is also a teacher, and we would all do well to heed his lessons.



I am delighted to be joining the History Department on a part-time basis this year. The department has earned a reputation for high-quality instruction, and I hope to live up to

the standard when I offer my first classes in the Winter quarter.

My area of special interest is colonial and revolutionary America. I went to school in the Cal State system (B.A. from Humboldt State and M.A. from San Francisco State) before finishing graduate study under Max Savelle at the University of Washington in 1968, and my scholarly work has focused largely on the origins of the revolution in Virginia and on early American slavery.

At age 60, I come to Cal Poly after 30 years of work experience at Cal State campuses. For 17 years I was a professor and dean at San Diego State; then for four years I served as academic vice president at Cal State, San Bernardino; and for the past nine years I served as president of Cal State, Dominguez Hills, one of California's most challenging universities. This year I retired to become a CSU Trustee, and I selected Cal Poly because of the strength of the institution and the desirability of living in this area. My wife, Susan, and I live in Cambria, a favorite small town in north San Luis Obispo County. In my spare time, I enjoy racquetball, walking the local beaches, collecting antiques, and reading.

I am pleased to be a part of the History Department and the Cal Poly community. I will do my best to contribute through solid teaching service.



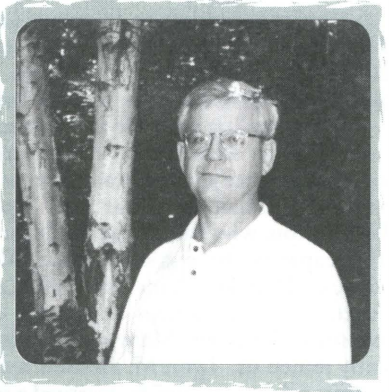
**LYNN M. HUDSON**

After fifteen years of traveling and studying out-of-state, I feel lucky to come back to California to teach. I was an undergraduate nearby, at University of California, Santa Cruz, and I have fond memories of the experience.

My work focuses on the history of women and people of color in the United States. African American history is my area of specialization. Before coming to Cal Poly, I taught in the Ethnic Studies

Department at University of California, San Diego, and in the African American Studies Department at Indiana University (where I earned my Ph.D. in History).

I have been teaching many new courses at Cal Poly including a course called "American Cultures" (History 202). This course encourages students to rethink myths about American history, and I am happy to say that I have converted more than one business major to the study of history!



**GARY STEENSON**

My wife and I recently settled in San Luis Obispo after two peripatetic decades spent living in South Korea, Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, The Hague, and Washington, D.C., while my wife was a foreign service officer working for the United States Information Agency. I have previously taught at UCSB, Arizona State, Cleveland State, Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne, San Francisco City College, George Mason University, and Chonnam National University in Kwangju, South Korea. Prior to all this, my wife and I were Peace Corps Volunteers in the Truk Islands (Chuuk), Micronesia, 1966-68. We both attended graduate school at UCSB, where I received my Ph.D. in modern European history in 1973.

In addition to my teaching experience, I have worked for the U.S. government as a computer systems manager for the American Embassy in China and the American Institute in Taiwan and as an English-language editor for the Foreign Broadcast Information Service in Hong Kong and Washington, D.C. My publications include three serious scholarly works on the history of European socialism before 1914 and a guide for foreigners to long-term living in South Korea. I also served briefly as book review editor and editor of the journal *International Labor and Working Class History*.

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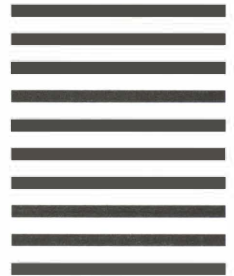
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The History Department is very grateful to those of you who helped support a wide range of activities within our department. The following alumni, faculty, and friends have provided generous support over the past two years. (Note: Donations received after 10/30/98 will be listed in the next edition.)

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## ALUMNI UPDATE

Year Graduated \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

May we have permission to publish your e-mail address? Yes No

Your perspective: Now that you've made the transition from university life, please tell us what you think about the education you received at Cal Poly.

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Your news: We'd like to hear about your career, family, anything you would like to share which might be of interest to former classmates, professors, and current History majors. (Photos are welcomed and will be returned if clearly labeled with your name and address.)

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## INFORMATION UPDATE

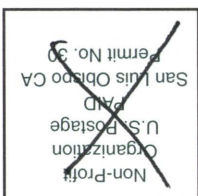
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(Your employer may match this contribution. Please check with your Human Resources Representative.)

We really appreciate your interest and support which is essential to continuing the level of quality that we seek to achieve. Most of the contributions that we receive go toward purchasing new equipment, purchasing items that the State does not support, and especially for supplementing scholarship awards. We have many deserving students and would like to be able to assist them as much as possible. Thank you for your support!



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